

## REGISTER OF CLASSIFICATION DECISIONS

|                                  |                                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Date of entry in Register:       | 25 February 1999               |
| Name of applicant/court:         | Paula Savage                   |
| Applicant to the Labelling Body: | Not Applicable                 |
| Title of Publication:            | Keith Haring                   |
| Other Known Titles:              | Not Stated                     |
| Director:                        | Not Applicable                 |
| Producer:                        | Not Applicable                 |
| Publisher:                       | Whitney Museum Of American Art |
| Author:                          | Elizabeth Sussman              |
| Format:                          | Book                           |
| Country of Origin:               | United States                  |
| Language:                        | English                        |

.....

**Components of film originally examined:** Not Applicable.

|           |                     |
|-----------|---------------------|
| Feature:  | Running time:       |
| Trailers: | Running time:       |
|           | Total Running time: |

Excision/Alteration: Not Applicable.

Reason(s) for Excision:

Not Applicable.

... Please turn over

Classification Decision:

Unrestricted.

Display Conditions:

Not Applicable.

Descriptive Note:

Not Applicable.

.....

Direction to issue a label has been given on: Not Applicable.

.....

#### **SUMMARY OF THE REASONS FOR DECISION:**

The book entitled *Keith Haring* is classified as:  
Unrestricted.

*Keith Haring* is intended to accompany the exhibition of his work at the City Gallery. The book is edited by Elisabeth Sussman and is published by the Whitney Museum of American Art in association with Bullfinch Press and Little, Brown. It is 296 pages long and consists of five articles written by art historians and a sixth piece which is a transcript of a conversation with four of Haring's contemporaries. A great many of Haring's works are reproduced throughout the book, as are photographs of Haring's graffiti in New York City and photographs of Haring working and posing with children and celebrities. Some of Haring's work contains highly stylised sexual content. There is also a selected exhibition history, bibliography, and a list of works in the exhibition. *Keith Haring* is both a visual record of the artist's body of work and a stimulating intellectual criticism of that work. The book is not a dry academic art history treatise. It rather establishes the cultural context that influenced Haring's work, and records how that work in turn influenced popular culture in the 1980s.

There is sexual content throughout the book, and occasionally, pictures which could be interpreted as dealing with bestiality and the infliction of serious physical harm. These pictures include a drawing of a man appearing to have sexual intercourse with a dog on p. 41 and a drawing of St Sebastian being pierced by toy airplanes on p. 185. Apart from some small photographs of male genitalia on p. 63 (which themselves form part of some early cut-ups and collages by the artist), the sexual and other content is drawn in the Haring pictographic style and is integrated into the complete body of Haring's work. Any concern about the extent of sexual and other content in *Keith Haring* is consequently diminished by its manner of presentation as an essential component of Haring's artistic expression and by the fact that it is depicted in the context of a critical record and examination of Haring's oeuvre.

*Keith Haring* fairly vibrates with life. Although sexual activity is depicted, it does not form the dominant effect or content of the book, and it is depicted by one of the twentieth century's great artists in his own iconic, pictographic style. The book's sexual and violent content must therefore be seen in the context of Haring's oeuvre, and in the context of the culture in which the work was created. The book has enormous artistic, cultural and educational merit. For these reasons, the availability of *Keith Haring* is entirely unlikely to be injurious to the public good.

OFLC Ref: 9801485